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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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SUBJ: GHAZALI SHAFIE ON "THE GREAT DOMINO FALLACY"

REF: KL 2386

1. SUMMARY: IN RADIO/TV ADDRESS MAY 6, GOM HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER GHAZALI SHAFIE DECLARED THAT "DOMINO THEORY IS PATENTLY SUSPECT IN TERMS OF NOT ONLY THEORETICAL BUT ALSO IMPIRICAL VALIDITY" AND REASSERTED GOM VIEW, ADVANCED BY PRIME MINISTER RAZAK AND OTHERS, THAT MALAYSIA IS NOT IN ANY SENSE A "DOMINO". CONSISTENT WITH GOM FOREIGN POLICY LINE, GHAZALI SAID THREAT TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY COMES FROM INTERNAL "ANTI-NATIONAL SUBVERSION" WHICH CANNOT BE MET BY U.S. MILITARY POWER. PRESS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMENT ON GHAZALI'S PRESENTATION GENERALLY ECHOED LINE THAT

INDOCHINA EXPERIENCE NOT APPLICABLE TO MALAYSIA AND THAT U.S. SHOULD NOT SEEK TO EXERT MILITARY POWER IN ASIA, BUT INSTEAD EXTEND "HELPING HAND" TO FRIENDLY NATIONS IN REGION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN LENGTHY RADIO/TV ADDRESS MAY 6, GHAZALI SHAFIE REJECTED IMPLICATIONS OF DOMINO THEORY AND EXCORIATED PAST U.S. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN SEASIA. GHAZALI ELOQUENTLY, IF NOT PERSUASIVELY, MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- REFERENCE BY PRESIDENT EISENHOWER TO FALL OF DIENBIENPHU "LIKE A ROW OF TUMBLING DOMINOES" AND FORECAST OF COMMUNIST CONQUEST OF SEASIA WAS "SIMPLISTIC" EXPRESSION OF U.S. PERCEPTIONS, PICKED UP BY LATER PRESIDENTS AND NOW BY PRESIDENT FORD.

-- WHILE DOMINO THEORY INITIALLY REINFORCED BY KOREAN WAR, ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNIST REGIME IN NORTH VIETNAM AND LATER BY NORTH VIETNAMESE INVASION OF SOUTH, U.S. POLICY TOWARD ASIA WAS PRECONDITIONED BY EAST-WEST "STALEMATE" WHICH "CAUSED AMERICA TO SEE PATTERN OF COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY WORLDWIDE."

-- THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF DOMINO THEORY -- I.E., INEVITABILITY OF COMMUNIST VICTORY AND UNIFORMITY OF ALL COUNTRIES -- ARE PATENTLY INCORRECT; VIEWED IN LIGHT OF THESE (INCORRECT) ASSUMPTIONS, HEIGHTENED DOMESTIC COMMUNIST INSURGENT ACTIVITIES IN MALAYSIA COULD BECOME SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY.

-- DOMINO THEORY WAS ATTRACTIVE IN U.S. BECAUSE OF ITS SIMPLICITY, DESIRE TO PROMOTE WORLDWIDE U.S. MILITARY POWER (E.G., U.S. SUPPORTED FRANCE IN INDOCHINA BECAUSE OF FRENCH COMMITMENT TO NATO), FACT U.S. WAS "ENAMORED OF THE EXCITING GAME OF GLOBAL MILITARY STRATEGY", AND PERCEPTION THAT ALL SECURITY PROBLEMS CAN BE SETTLED BY MILITARY MEANS WHICH LED TO "SITUATION WHERE MILITARY STRATEGY DICTATED AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY INSTEAD OF THE REVERSE"; THUS "THE DOMINO THEORY BECAME A SELF-PERPETUATING MYTH."

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-- "DOMINO THEORY IS VALID IN MINDS OF AMERICAN POLICY-MAKERS...FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE, THEY ARE PERFECTLY RIGHT; IT IS THE AMERICAN DOMINOES THAT ARE FALLING".

-- INTERNAL ORDER OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STATES IS NOT DETERMINED BY THE COLLAPSE OF AMERICAN SUPPORT, UNLESS THEIR INTERNAL ORDER HAPPENS TO BE A FUNCTION OF THAT SUPPORT.

-- ADVENT OF WORLD POLITICAL MULTIPOLARITY RENDERS DOMINO THEORY OBSOLETE, THREAT OF EXTERNAL AGGRESSION BY EXPANSIONIST POWERS HAS BECOME LESS LIKELY, AND SEASIAN NATIONS HAVE BECOME MORE ORGANIZED, BETTER DEVELOPED AND THEREFORE BETTER ABLE TO RESIST AGGRESSION FROM ANY SOURCE.

-- U.S. WILL HAVE TO TAKE COGNIZANCE OF CHANGES IN NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL POWER, AND "THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF AMERICAN POLICY AN ERA OF CHANGE IS THAT CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT ARE BEING MET WITH THE PERCEPTIONS AND TOOLS OF THE PAST."

-- FINALLY, THE U.S. MUST GRASP THAT ITS "GLOBAL SECURITY LINKS ARE ACTUALLY PREMISED ON POLITICAL (AND) SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND NOT MILITARY EFFICACY" AND "THE FALL OF AMERICAN MILITARY DOMINOES NEED NOT PRESAGE THE FALL OF POLITICAL DOMINOES."

3. GHAZALI'S POINTS WERE REINFORCED BY "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST) EDITORIAL MAY 7 THAT STATED "NORTH VIETNAM'S PATH TO COMMUNISM WAS ITS OWN...ANY EXPECTATION THAT PHNOM PENH, HANOI AND SAIGON WILL NOW BECOME PUPPETS OF PEKING IS LUDICROUS. CHINA CERTAINLY DOES NOT EXPECT THIS TO HAPPEN." NST WENT ON THAT "VIETNAM THEREFORE POSES NO DIRE THREAT TO MALAYSIA -- TODAY OR IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE...THE COMMUNISTS IN VIETNAM SUCCEEDED BECAUSE THEY REPRESENTED THE FORCE OF NATIONALISM, THE FORCE FOR PROGRESS; AND THEY FOUGHT AGAINST A NON-REPRESENTATIVE, UNPOPULAR GOVERNMENT PROPPED UP BY AN EXTERNAL POWER WHICH PLAYED A DOMINANT OR NEAR DOMINANT ROLE." ASSERTING THAT MALAYSIA'S "FIRST LINE DEFENSE AGAINST COMMUNISM MUST BE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL AT HOME AND DIPLOMATIC ABROAD", NST CONCLUDED THAT GOM IS IN GOOD POSITION TO ESTABLISH FRIENDLY RELATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH PHNOM PENH, SAIGON (AND HANOI), THUS CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVEMENT OF "PAX ASEANA" AND NEUTRALITY SYSTEM FOR SEASIA.

4. ON A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT NOTE, CHINESE-LANGUAGE "MALAYAN THUNG PAU" SAID MAY 6 THAT, IN VIEW OF INDOCHINA DEBACLE, U.S. MAY ATTEMPT EXPAND MILITARY INFLUENCE IN AREA, INCLUDING INDIAN OCEAN AND POSSIBLY MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH SINGAPORE. PAPER CALLED UPON U.S. TO ADOPT "FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR" POLICY, NOT USING MILITARY MIGHT, TO ESTABLISH NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH SEASIAN NATIONS AND TO EXTEND AID TO NEEDY COUNTRIES WITHOUT ANY STRINGS ATTACHED.

5. COMMENT: GHAZALI'S THEORIZING ABOUT DOMINO THEORY ENLARGED UPON PM RAZAK'S COMMENTS AT JAMAICA COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE MAY 2 THAT "NONE EXCEPT AMERICAN DOMINOES HAVE

FALLEN SO FAR" AND THAT VIETNAM STRUGGLE NOT PARALLEL TO
MALAYSIAN SITUATION. IN MALAYSIA, RAZAK SAID,
COMMUNIST TERRORISTS ARE "BANDITS WITH LITTLE POPULAR SUPPORT"
WHEREAS VIETCONG "HAD THE INTERESTS OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE
AT HEART." GHAZALI'S IMPLICATION THAT MALAYSIA AND ITS
NEIGHBORS NEED NOT FEAR THE EFFECTS OF A COMMUNIST VICTORY
IN INDOCHINA DOES NOT REFLECT THE FEELINGS OF MANY OF HIS FELLOW
SENIOR OFFICIALS, NOR POSSIBLY GHAZALI'S OWN PRIVATE VIEWS. HIS
VIEWS THAT AMERICAN POWER IN ASIA HAS BEEN MISUSED AND THERE IS
NEED FOR ASEAN TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIP WITH INDOCHINA NATIONS ON
BASIS OF NEUTRALITY AND MUTUAL NON-INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC
AFFAIRS, HOWEVER, ARE WIDELY HELD WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE
GOVT ESTABLISHMENT. HENCE THE GOVT-INSPIRED ANNOUNCEMENT
IN KL PAPERS MAY 8 THAT THE ASEAN "NEUTRALITY" PROPOSAL
WILL BE "FINALIZED" BY SENIOR EXPERTS AT THE MEETING WHICH
TRADITIONALLY PRECEDES THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING THAT
BEGINS HERE NEXT TUESDAY (MAY 13). (FULL TEXT GHAZALI'S
SPEECH WILL BE POUCHED ALL ADDRESSEES.)
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